

JUDICIARY

The Budget includes total funding of \$3.9 billion (\$730 million General Fund) for the Judiciary.

The Judicial Branch consists of the Supreme Court, courts of appeal, trial courts, and the Judicial Council. The trial courts are funded with a combination of funding from the General Fund, county maintenance-of-effort requirements, fines, fees, and other charges. The state-level judiciary receives most of its funding from the General Fund.

ADOPTED SOLUTIONS:

The Budget restructures funding for trial courts and makes funding for the Judiciary more transparent. The state assumed funding responsibility for trial courts in 1997. The Budget alters the funding structure for trial courts consistent with the goals of the reform legislation.

- *Trial Court Funding Offsets*—A one-time decrease of \$486 million General Fund, which is offset as follows:
 - The use of \$235 million of trial court reserves based on each court's available reserve.
 - A redirection of \$11 million from the Administrative Office of the Courts.
 - A reduction of \$240 million from court construction funds to support trial court operations. The savings in court construction funds is achieved by pausing

the design activities for approximately 38 court projects for up to one year.

The pause will coincide with a full review of the court construction program and court construction standards to ensure operational efficiencies can be reflected in the design of new trial courts. Six court projects that are near design completion will proceed to construction in 2012-13 once the Judicial Council reviews the cost and scope of these projects. The construction phase of these projects will be funded with lease revenue bonds.

- *Trial Court Funding*—A \$50 million reduction to all trial courts on a proportional basis. The ongoing reduction to the trial courts is \$111 million, of which \$50 million will be offset by redirecting funds from court construction to support trial court operations.
- *Judicial Branch State-Level Operations*—A reduction of \$8 million General Fund and a redirection of \$11 million other funds to the trial courts. The Judicial Council will identify reductions and efficiencies implemented to achieve this level of savings.
- *Court Fees*—An increase of \$50 million Trial Court Trust Fund as a result of civil court fee increases to offset ongoing reductions to the trial courts.

OTHER CHANGE:

- *Trial Court Reserves*—A reserve equal to two percent of the statewide allocation to trial courts will be held at the state level, and local reserves will be reduced to one percent of the courts operating budget by June 30, 2014. The Judicial Council will be authorized to allocate funds from the statewide reserve to individual courts as necessary to address emergencies and unavoidable budget shortfalls.